

Notes for "The future of the Ohio Conference
Thurs. Feb. 22; 7:00 pm at Congregational, N. Canton
Scribe:Sandy Hutchinson Convener: Mark Frey

Consensus was it was helpful to hear Mark's opening comments on the history of Ohio Conference

Opening questions:

What services are churches seeking from judicatories?

What services are clergy seeking from judicatories?

We need to shed our over head costs

At first there were several questions raised from the group:

What are needs?

Authorization for ministry

Search and call

Relationships to one another

Identity

What has ONA done to common identity?

Diverse culture will make it difficult

Where do we envision church "missionally" in 20 years?

How do we structure for the future?

What is ultimate goal (of visionary team)?

Mark said it is to come together in our structure ; taking all of our current tasks and making sure they are being met

What will we be called?

One lay person in particular felt it might be helpful to come up with a name first. Mark acknowledged this has been raised and discussed with no final agreement at this time.

Comment: When we first became UCC there was such an enthusiasm with being UCC does not feel that exists today.

Question: What is common goal?

Mark: to support/enhance ministry at all levels; ie camp

Participant: Our local church has a goal; what is conference goal? This led to a discussion on "we" vs "they" and a need to see to "us" not "me and you" or "us and them"

Churches in leaving have used synod issues as a reason when what they want is relationship and felt it was not there

Need to look at social analysis and culture; which will help us discern what millennials want

Need to have opportunities to bring conference/associations/churches together; to share common vision and goal

Can we empower associations to do what conference did?

Need to have help with technology and how to use technology in today's world; ie:
Skype Many (older) pastors are not as current with use of technology

Cultural shift is that millennials are not joining anything; need to break out of institutional model. One pastor commented how there are 80 people in the pew on Sunday, but recently started a weekly discussion/blog on line and now there are over 300 people reading it...feels that his congregation is much larger than what's represented on Sundays

What judicatories need to do is help me connect with others and resources that I need to help with better use of social media in sharing information

Look at "on line" church success

People, especially younger generation, are not interested today in sitting in a pew; not looking to church to meet people/their needs because they are not finding it in church.

People are looking for interaction and knowing what we'll be doing in 20 years; not interested in what church was like 20 years ago

As a local pastor I need;
Tech support
Evangelism help for a new world

Significance of Billy Graham in his time was that he used what was available at the time; today our focus needs to be on electronics not geography.

Need collaboration

People not interested in meetings but in relationships/purposeful gatherings

One pastor pointed out people have gifts they want to share but not necessarily by going to meetings. He needed a room painted at church; invited people to come to a painting party. The room got painted.

There is value in collaboration and communication with one another. Churches drift away because they are not in association with each other.

Millennials talk about spirituality, not church. The idea of the "3.0 church" was raised. We need to affirm where millennials are even when it does not fit our boxes.

How do we help different generations learn to live together?

Personal note from the scribe:

This meeting was far more energizing and exciting than the afternoon meeting. I think it would be invaluable to try to gather, maybe on line, those under 50 whose voice and ideas we need to hear. They were present at the afternoon session but I realize they were probably shut out by older, retirees!